

CLAIMS

1 (WITHDRAWN) A method of providing ligamentary like support between two spaced locations in the body of a patient wherein the locations comprise ligament and/or muscle tissue comprising fixing an anchor in each location, connecting the anchors by a filamentary element, adjusting the tension of the filamentary element between the locations to establish the desired spatial relationship between the locations to provide at least a supplementary ligamentary support between the locations.

2. (CANCELLED)

3. (WITHDRAWN) A method as claimed at claim 1 wherein the anchors are provided with a retaining means adapted to be able to retain the filamentary element in a state of tension between the anchors.

4. (WITHDRAWN) A method as claimed at claim 3 wherein the retaining means enables movement of the filamentary element through the anchor to enable the length of the filamentary element between the locations to be shortened but to prevent movement of the filamentary element through the anchors to enable the length of the filamentary element between the applications to be increased.

5. (WITHDRAWN) A method as claimed at claim 1 wherein the filamentary element is not biodegradable over a period of time and is adapted to facilitate the growth of tissue between the locations to provide said ligamentary support between the locations.

6. (WITHDRAWN) A method as claimed at claim 1 wherein the anchor comprises a head having a configuration facilitating insertion into the tissue and retention of the head in the tissue once inserted, the anchor further having a base which is intended to receive the filamentary element, said method comprising inserting the head of the anchor into the tissue with the base buried in the tissue.

7. (WITHDRAWN) A method as claimed at claim 6 wherein the head has a barbed configuration.

8. (WITHDRAWN) A method as claimed at claim 7 wherein the barbed configuration comprises a set of prongs extending in a divergent manner from the end of the head towards the base, said prongs being resiliently flexible along their length, said method comprising compressing the ends of the prongs towards each other prior to insertion of the head into the tissue, inserting the head into the tissue and releasing the ends of the prongs once the head is located in the tissue.

9. (WITHDRAWN) A method as claimed at claim 8 wherein the anchor is associated with a holder which is configured to retain the anchor with the head directed outwardly from the holder, the method comprising installing an anchor in the holder, placing the anchor in position in the tissue by means of the holder and subsequently disengaging the holder from the anchor.

10. (WITHDRAWN) A method as claimed at claim 9 wherein the filamentary element is installed in the anchor and the anchor is installed on the holder prior to insertion of the head into the tissue.

11. (WITHDRAWN) A method as claimed at claim 9 wherein the holder is adapted to receive and support the prongs in their compressed state, said method comprising releasing the prongs from engagement with the holder when the anchor is in position.

12. (WITHDRAWN) A method as claimed at claim 9 wherein the holder is associated with an insertion appliance, the insertion appliance having a shaft, one end of the shaft adapted to receive the holder, the other end of the shaft supporting the handle, an ejection means extending between the handle and the one end and having a bearing member at one end adapted to bear upon an anchor when installed in the holder, the handle provided with a manipulation member adapted to cause the bearing member to bear on the anchor and cause the displacement of the anchor from the holder, said method comprising locating

the holder at the one end of the shaft, installing an anchor into the holder, placing the anchor in position in the tissue by manipulation of the appliance and on location of the anchor in the tissue, activation of the manipulation means to cause displacement of the anchor from the holder.

13. (WITHDRAWN) A method as claimed at claim 1 wherein the spaced locations comprise the recto-vaginal ligaments or the arcus tendineus ligaments to each side of the vagina and the method resides in the re-establishing of the fascial support for the vagina, said method comprising fixing said anchors into the recto-vaginal ligaments or the arcus tendineus ligaments respectively to each side of the vagina, applying the filamentary element between the anchors and introducing the filamentary element into the fascial tissue such that with time it will become embodied with the fascia and optimally tensioning the filamentary element between the anchors.

14. (WITHDRAWN) A method as claimed at claim 1 wherein the filamentary element is applied to at least one of the anchors prior to fixation.

15. (WITHDRAWN) A method as claimed at claim 14 wherein the filamentary element is applied to a pair of anchors prior to fixation at a spacing greater than the desired spatial relationship.

16. (CANCELLED)

17. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A tissue anchor formed of a material which is compatible for location in human and/or animal muscle and/or ligament tissue, the anchor comprising a base, a head attached thereto, and a plurality of tapered prongs extending from said head, each prong radially diverging in a lengthwise direction away from said head while narrowing in cross section therealong to form a conical tip and arranged to facilitate retention of the head in the tissue once inserted, and the base formed with an aperture adapted to receive a length of a filamentary element and to permit slidable movement of the filamentary element through the aperture in one direction but to restrict movement of the filamentary element through the aperture in the opposite direction.

18. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A tissue anchor as claimed in claim 17 wherein the aperture is associated with a locking element positioned to extend across the aperture to define a space between the locking element and an opposed edge of the aperture, said space for receiving the filamentary element, the locking element having one face in one direction and another face in an opposite direction, the locking element cooperating with the filamentary element when the filamentary element is in position in the space to restrict the movement of the filamentary element in said opposite direction and to enable movement of the filamentary element in said one direction.

19. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A tissue anchor as claimed in claim 18 wherein the edge of the locking element defining the space is formed to engage the surface of the filamentary element when the filamentary element is moved in said opposite direction.

20. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A tissue anchor as claimed in claim 19 wherein the edge is defined by a surface extending between the faces of the locking element, the surface being inclined away from the opposed edge of the aperture in said opposite direction.

21. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A tissue anchor as claimed in claim ~~19~~ 20 wherein the edge is formed with slots which extend from the face proximate said one direction to at least an intermediate position across the surface.

22. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A tissue anchor as claimed in claim 19 wherein the edge of the locking element has a convex arcuate configuration.

23. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A tissue anchor as claimed in claim 18 wherein the space has a configuration substantially corresponding to the cross section of the filamentary element.

24. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A tissue anchor as claimed in claim 23 wherein the space has a configuration corresponding to the cross sectional configuration of the filamentary element when under longitudinal tension.

25. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A tissue anchor as claimed in claim 18 wherein the space has a part annular configuration.

26. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A tissue anchor as claimed in claim 18 wherein the space is located substantially centrally across the central longitudinal axis of the anchor.

27. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A tissue anchor as claimed in claim 18 wherein the face of the locking member proximate said one direction is formed as an inward recess of the edge.

28. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A tissue anchor as claimed in claim 18 wherein the locking member is inclined with respect to the base.

29. (CANCELLED)

30. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A tissue anchor as claimed in claim 17 wherein the prongs are located in substantially equidistant spacing around the

central axis of the head, and the prongs diverge away from the end of the head in the direction of the base.

31. (CANCELLED)

32. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A tissue anchor as claimed in claim 17 wherein the outer end of the prongs are pointed.

33. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A tissue anchor as claimed in claim 17 wherein the prongs are resiliently flexible along their length.

34. (CANCELLED)

35. (WITHDRAWN) A holder adapted to support the anchor as claimed at claim 17 comprising a socket configured to clampingly receive the base, the socket being configured to allow access to the aperture, the clamping engagement between the holder and the base being such that on relative movement between the holder and the anchor the anchor is able to be disengaged from the holder.

36. (WITHDRAWN) A holder as claimed at claim 35 wherein the base has a substantially laminar-like configuration comprising two opposed substantially parallel faces.

37. (WITHDRAWN) A holder as claimed at claim 35 wherein the socket comprises a pair of spaced elements which receive opposed sides of the base with the aperture between the spaced elements.

38. (WITHDRAWN) A holder as claimed at claim 36 wherein the socket comprises a pair of spaced elements which receive opposed sides of the base with the aperture between the spaced elements.

39. (WITHDRAWN) A holder as claimed at claim 35 wherein the socket is defined by a set of boss elements which are configured to receive the free ends of the prongs of the tissue anchor when compressed radially with respect to the central axis of the anchor.

40. (CANCELLED)

41. (WITHDRAWN) A holder as claimed at claim 35 including a length of said filamentary element supported by the anchor.

42. (WITHDRAWN) A pair of holders of the form as claimed at claim 41 supporting between themselves the length of the filamentary element.

43. (CANCELLED)

44. (WITHDRAWN) An insertion appliance comprising a shaft adapted to accommodate at one end the holder as claimed at claim 35, the other end of the shaft supporting a handle, an ejection means extending between the one end and the handle, a bearing member provided at the one end and a manipulation means provided adjacent the handle whereby on said anchor being installed in the holder and on activation of the manipulation means the bearing member will bear upon the anchor to move the anchor from engagement with the holder.

45. (CANCELLED)

46. (WITHDRAWN) An insertion appliance as claimed at claim 44 including a length of said filamentary element supported by the anchor.

47. (WITHDRAWN) A pair of insertion appliances of the form as claimed at claim 46 for supporting between themselves the length of the filamentary element.

48. (WITHDRAWN) An insertion appliance as claimed at claim 47 provided with a pair of said holders which support between themselves the length of the filamentary element.

49. (CANCELLED)

50. (WITHDRAWN) A method as claimed at claim 6, wherein the anchor is associated with a holder which is configured to retain the anchor with the head directed outwardly from the holder, the method comprising installing an anchor in the holder, placing the anchor in position in the tissue by means of the holder and subsequently disengaging the holder from the anchor.

51. (WITHDRAWN) A holder adapted to support the anchor as claimed at claim 30 comprising comprising a socket configured to clampingly receive the base, the socket being configured to allow access to the aperture, the clamping engagement between the holder and the base being such that on relative movement between the holder and the anchor the anchor is able to be disengaged from the holder.

52. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A tissue anchor as claimed in claim 18 wherein the locking element forms a flexible junction with the aperture such that movement of the locking element in said one direction increases the space between the opposed edge of the aperture and the locking element, and movement of the locking element in said opposite direction acts to decrease the space between the opposed edge of the aperture and the locking element.

53. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A tissue anchor as claimed in claim 17, wherein the head is formed with a pointed tip.

54. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A tissue anchor as claimed in claim 17, wherein said prongs extend radially backward from said head.

55. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A tissue anchor as claimed in claim 17, wherein said prongs each have a substantially cylindrical configuration.